



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

Volume 5 Issue 2

October 2003

Bird Banding in Hassayampa

By Anne Leight

The Hassayampa River Preserve's Bird Banding Program has been in operation since June, 1999. The program is sponsored by the Preserve and the Nature Conservancy of Arizona. The banding typically takes place two ½ days a month on weekends. The program is run by volunteers and funding is provided by private contributions. Since its inception, program volunteers have banded about 1,400 birds.

The primary goals of the Bird Banding Program are research and promoting public awareness of our natural world. The Hassayampa River Preserve is a unique desert riparian habitat. The Hassayampa River flows primarily underground through most of its 100 mile course. But within the preserve its crystal clear waters emerge, flowing above ground throughout the year. The lush streamside habitat of the Hassayampa River is home to some of the desert's most spectacular wildlife. Over 230 species of birds live, nest, or migrate along the Hassayampa River riparian corridor. Many of the species have become dangerously imperiled as riparian habitats have disappeared from the Arizona landscape (riparian or streamside habitats have declined by as much as 95% throughout the western United States). The large Gooding willows and Fremont cottonwoods surrounding the Preserve's unique 4-acre spring-fed Palm Lake provide important nesting habitat for the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. Walking around this pond, a tuned ear can hear the calls of a Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, or Hutton's Vireo (and many more!). Walking further south along the river reveals a Vermillion Flycatcher or a pair of Tropical Kingbirds. And, we frequently hear from high above 'our' Red-Shouldered Hawk who has made the Preserve its home for years. Banding birds at the preserve provides important information about the Hassayampa River Preserve's role as an important pathway for migratory birds in the Southwest and Central Arizona.

Bird banding demonstrations are given to the public several times a year. Children are especially enthralled to see bird banding up close and to have a sustained view of such a fleeting creature.

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At our next meeting....

Wednesday October, 8 at 6:30 p.m.

**"Birds and Natural History of
Northwestern Mexico"**

**By Jennifer & Dave MacKay, of Solipaso
Tours**



Elegant Trogon by Dave MacKay

We, Jennifer and David MacKay, along with our daughters, Salina and Elly, moved from Marin County, California to Alamos in 1994. We were looking for a different lifestyle for our family that took us out of the traditional and into something new. We had an opportunity to move to Alamos and it seemed like the perfect place. Little did we know that we would still be living here, owning a business, raising our children and being a part of the fabric of this small community. Jennifer, fluent in Spanish, French, and Portuguese, has lived on four continents and studied the cuisines of many cultures. She is a certified massage therapist and has experience in yoga and alternative medicine. David has traveled widely and is most interested in active, adventurous experiential tourism. He is also an avid birder, gardener, and cook. Both of us genuinely enjoy working with people and helping to make their time here in Alamos a memorable one.

They will spend the evening sharing their experiences in Alamos and the surrounding area of Mexico.

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Bird Banding in Hassayampa

Visits from schools and scout troops have also proven successful. Children have accompanied banders on the "net runs" and are intrigued by the capture process. Sometimes, young children who have watched bird banding will ask, "does the bird get hurt when you do that?", or, "are the birds scared?" Every bird bander will ask this question too - "Does the human handling of a wild bird (for 5 - 10 minutes) effect the bird in any detrimental way?" Well, some of our birds have been "recaptured" (a recaptured bird is one taken from the mist net that already has a band) over 8 times, and they do not seem to be affected by the banding experience.

Hassayampa River Preserve bird banders are trained in:

- * How to handle the bird.
- * How to extract a bird from a mist net
- * What to do with an injured bird.
- * How to recognize signs of stress, overheating, or chill.
- * How to apply the correct size band for the bird.
- * How to examine and record data for each bird.
- * How to release the bird: birds who are nesting (females with brood patches) are released near the net where they were found. Likewise, the summer hatching year birds will be released close to where they were found.
- * How to record the data collected in a manner that complies with Federal Guidelines.

Much can be learned from the banding information, as each banded bird has a unique identification (band number). Each banded bird has the following data recorded:

- * Band number
- * Species
- * Gender
- * Age
- * Weight
- * Fat
- * Evidence of Breeding
- * Molt
- * Wing length
- The time banded, and preserve the location where were captured.

All data is sent to the National Bird Banding Laboratory in Maryland. Should the bird be recaptured or recovered and reported to the Bird Banding Laboratory, the initial bander receives a report and learns how far the bird has traveled (in addition to a lot of other information). Birds banded at Hassayampa River Preserve are often recaptured months and sometimes years after being banded.

Pictures taken by Anne Leight follow:



Yellow-billed Cuckoo



Red-shafted Flicker

This article is part one. The second part will appear in November's newsletter.

The following sign prepared by Jak Keyser, one of our talented members, will be displayed at our meeting re-



freshment table:

Thank you Trader Joe's, and Fry's Marketplace for

A message from your president...

It's unfortunate that many of you weren't present at our September 10th meeting. We had a good attendance at the meeting but it would have been so nice to see all of you there.

First of all, Mike Rabe of Arizona Game and Fish gave an excellent program on the doves, quail and grouse of Arizona. We even had several hunters attend the program to learn more about the species they go out to the field to hunt. Everyone there were extremely interested in Mike's very professional presentation and asked him numerous questions.

Secondly, Josh Burns, our treasurer gave a very detailed presentation on our budget and the way our funds are expended. Josh covered in detail the provisions of our insurance policy and why it is so necessary for an organization such as ours.

Several of our members contacted me after the meeting and told me that they had a clearer understanding of why we need to have "Friends of Sonoran Audubon Society" and the importance of our insurance policy. Josh said that we are actively searching for another insurance company which will have similar coverage with smaller premiums.

I urge all of you to consider to becoming "Friends of Sonoran Audubon Society" With the elimination of the dues share from the National Audubon Society, it appears that it's the only way we can survive.

SAS Web Site: www.sonoranaudubon.org

Join the National Audubon Society

New adult or family membership: \$20.00

Seniors and students: \$15.00

Renewal fee for seniors and students: \$15.00

These fees cover membership in the National Audubon Society and a subscription to Audubon magazine. An application form for National membership may be obtained from the chapter at the regular meeting or by contacting <chuckkan@mindspring.com>.

Each year all National members in the Sonoran Audubon chapter area receive the September *Gambel's Tales* that describes major chapter activities for the year. All monthly issues of *Gambel's Tales* may be obtained free from the chapter website <www.sonoranaudubon.org> or by mail for \$10.00 per year. If you wish to get the newsletter by mail or to be notified when a new issue is placed on the website, please contact chuckkan@mindspring.com or by mail to: Sonoran Audubon Society P O Box 8068 Glendale, AZ 85312-8068

Sonoran Audubon Society Officers & Board Members

President Charles Kangas 623-931-6677 chuckkan@mindspring.com

Vice-President Robert McCormick 602-237-3951 mcbobaz@aol.com

Treasurer Josh Burns 602-468-3002 josh_a_burns@yahoo.com

Secretary Tice Supplee 602-258-7080 tice_az@hotmail.com

Board Members at Large

Dwayne Fink 480-967-9202 edna.fink@asu.edu

Tom Jones 602-861-1217 trjones@grand-canyon.edu

Tom Lazzelle 602-843-8451 lazzelle.tom@ev.state.az.us

Jim Leonhardt 602-938-0979 deajimphx@cs.com

Dan Bohlmann 602-938-2881 dans.bohlmann@prodigy.net

Committee Contacts

Programs Andrée Tarby 480-948-1074 atarby@cox.net

Education Any volunteers?

Field Trips Eleanor Campbell 623-977-7639 ercamp@juno.com

Finance Josh Burns 602-468-3002 josh_a_burns@yahoo.com

Hospitality Jim Leonhardt 602-938-0979 deajimphx@cs.com

Membership Dwayne Fink 480-967-9202 edna.fink@asu.edu

Newsletter Charles Kangas 623-931-6677 chuckkan@mindspring.com

Publicity Tom Lazzelle 602-843-8451 lazzelle.tom@ev.state.az.us

TREASURER'S REPORT, September 19, 2003

The following is the Sonoran Audubon Society tentative budget for Fiscal 2003-2004:

	Budgeted	Actual
INCOME		
NAS dues return	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 0.00
Friends of SAS		1,176.00
Other Chapter Sources	<u>3,500.00</u>	<u>126.57</u>
TOTAL	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,302.57
EXPENDITURES		
<i>Gambel's Tales</i>	800.00	\$ 396.01
Fund-raising	200.00	104.94
Committees	680.00	29.24
Operations	1,320.00	256.85
Insurance	<u>1,500.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 757.80
CHANGE IN CASH		\$ 544.77
SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN CASH		
On hand, June 1, 2003		\$ 9,630.13
On hand, October 16, 2002		<u>10,174.90</u>
CHANGE IN CASH		\$ 544.77
ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
Balance, checking account		\$ 1,857.15
Balance, savings account		8,317.75
Not yet deposited		<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 10,174.90
Held for Butterfly Garden		<u>611.16</u>
CLEAR FUNDS		\$ 9,563.74

Under the Bylaws and subsequent actions of the Board this Treasurer's Report appears in *Gambel's Tales* three times a year.

Any questions including requests for more details may be submitted to me at josh_a_burns@yahoo.com.

Audubon Arizona and Chapters Work Together on Rio Salado Center

By Sam Campana
Executive Director, Audubon Arizona
602-468-6470
sam@scottsdale.com

Audubon is dedicated to protecting birds and other wild-life and the habitat that supports them. Our national network of community-based nature centers and chapters, scientific and educational programs, and advocacy on behalf of areas sustaining important bird populations, engage millions of people of all ages and backgrounds in positive conservation experiences.

Audubon Arizona is very excited about sharing with your Sonoran Audubon Chapter the progress we are making in having an Audubon Nature Center in Phoenix.

We are currently negotiating with the City of Phoenix for four acres at a cost of only a \$1 a year on the southeast corner of Central Avenue and the Salt River – the historic center of the Valley! There is already a wonderful gateway shade structure there – if you drive by soon you'll recognize it!

Our Audubon Center would be part of the Rio Salado Project that the City of Phoenix has been working on with the Army Corps of Engineers and Maricopa County Flood Control District – an \$85 million project! Federal dollars pay for 2/3 and the City and County are doing the balance.

Audubon Arizona needs your help to work with the community surrounding the Center and the entire Valley to be sure it fits the needs – integrating us into the schools in Phoenix and Roosevelt District. We are already working to have ASU interns be involved!

Please help us now. Come into our offices at 44th Street and Camelback and help prepare educational materials. We are meeting regularly with the community and need clerical volunteers. Our Library is growing – can you help or donate? We will have to raise all the resources to build the facility – will you help on that campaign?

We will be at your Chapter meeting on October 8 and hope you will come and support us!

Join us for a preview hike Saturday morning at 7:00 AM October 18th, at the site for the new Audubon Nature Center, Central Avenue and the Salt River. See you there! And thank you!

This a list of the current members of Friends of the Sonoran Audubon Society:

Dan S Bohlmann
Marian Bound
Eleanor Campbell
George Drew
Marshall Esty
Phillip Evanstock
June S Gordier
Charles Kangas
Tom Lazzelle
Jim & Dea Leonhardt
Nancy London
Andrea J Nesbitt
John Nichol
Jerry & Doris Rankin
Bea Raymond
Charles & Loretta Richards
Richard Schooler
Ronald & Pat Sigler
Lorraine Thompson
Jerry W Van Wyngarden
Lewise Weeton
Jeanette M Winters
Albert & Nancy Woods
Stuart Zink

We have just started the program of Friends of Sonoran Audubon Society and already we have 24 members. A number of members have contacted me and said that they were mailing checks to us soon.

I feel that we are going on a forward path and will get out of the quandary that the cut in dues shares by the national Audubon Society put us in.

The attendance at both our general meetings and our field trips is expanding and our new members are interested in becoming more active. I hope that even more of you will be able to attend our meetings and join us on the very interesting trips our field trip committee has scheduled . Keep checking our newsletters to keep up with the upcoming activities.

Christmas Bird Counts

The complete 2003—2004 Christmas Bird Count schedule will appear in next month's newsletter.

Remember the Tres Rios Christmas Count sponsored by the Sonoran Audubon Society will be held on Thursday, December 18. To participate contact:

Daniela Yellan 602-942-7791
dyellan@aol.com

Fall and Winter 2003 Field Trips

Sonoran Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on all outings!

Please organize your own carpool, consolidate vehicles at meeting places, and/or contact leaders for carpooling assistance. Sonoran Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on all outings!

Field Trips are rated in difficulty levels one, the easiest, to five, the most difficult. It is recommended that passengers reimburse drivers at an agreed rate.

REMINDERS: Don't forget water, sunscreen, hats and insect repellent. Wear neutral colors. Avoid bright colors. Wear sturdy walking shoes

Wednesday, October 1

Page Springs and Montezuma Well

Leader: John Delventhal 928-634-2966

Montezuma Well is a natural body of water fed by an eternal spring and is surrounded by cottonwoods and desert scrub. Indian ruins and canals add to the geologically fascinating habitat. Page Springs is a fish hatchery where water also attracts many birds. Look for wintering ducks, wrens, Western Bluebird, Spotted Towhee, Loggerhead Shrike and Bridled Titmouse.

Difficulty: 1 Bring Lunch. Call leader for meeting time and place.

Tuesday, October 14

Estrella Mt. Park and Gila River

Leader: George Wall 623-875-7057

WALLABY@worldnet.att.net

This regional park and nearby river located near Good-year off I-10 is an excellent birding area with easy walking. Over 100 species have been recorded here during the year. Last year, on almost the same date, 42 species were recorded.

Difficulty: 1 Morning Only LEAVE at 7:30 a.m. from Sun Bowl parking lot on 107th Ave. just south of Peoria Ave. in Sun City OR meet later at the corner of Estrella Parkway and Vineyard by the bridge overlooking the Gila River. Entrance fee: \$5.00 per car.

Friday, October 24

Hassayampa River Preserve

Leader: Lorraine Thompson 623-546-2103

The Nature Conservancy's Preserve on the Hassayampa River near Wickenburg is open to the public again and is always a premier birding spot. Red-shouldered Hawks and the endangered Willow Flycatcher have nested here for several years.

The Nature Conservancy's Preserve on the Hassayampa River near Wickenburg is open to the public again and is always a premier birding spot. Red-shouldered Hawks and the endangered Willow Flycatcher have nested here for several years. The hawks should be here but the flycatcher already migrated. We should start to see the wintering species at the Preserve.

Difficulty: 1 Morning only, but bring a lunch if you want to enjoy the picnic area later.

Meet at the parking lot of the Preserve located on Route 60 about three miles southeast of Wickenburg, about 50 miles west of Phoenix at 8:00 a.m. Call leader to register.

The Nature Conservancy requests a donation of \$5.00 per person.

Saturday, November 1

Jackie Meck Lake

Leader: Daniela Yellan 602-942-7791

dyellan@aol.com

Explore this rich habitat 'lake' at the confluence of the Agua Fria and Gila Rivers, near Estrella Mountain Park.

This is part of the Buckeye Water District Conservation Area. This is an opportunity to hopefully see many species of waterfowl, as well as possible migrants along the canal.

Call leader for time and meeting location. Scopes will be very helpful. Time permitting, we may have the chance to explore other nearby birding areas.

Difficulty 1. Morning only. Limit 10

Saturday, November 8

Arlington Valley

Leaders: Joan and Dean Luehrs 623 875-1016

luehrs1@mindspring.com

Arlington Valley west of Phoenix and south of Arlington with its fields, ponds, canals, a dam, and a desert butte provides a variety of habitats to search for birds. On the North American Spring Migration bird count in May, 2003, a White Ibis was seen amidst the Great Egrets. Swallows, blackbirds, raptors and sparrows should be prevalent.

Difficulty: 1 Bring Lunch.

Meet at the Sun Bowl parking lot on 107th Ave. just south of Peoria Ave., Sun City, at 7:00 a.m.

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Fall and Winter 2003 Field Trips

Friday, November 14

Sweetwater Water Facility, Tucson

Leader: George Wall 623 875-7057

WALLABY@worldnet.att.net

Sweetwater Treatment area is just off I-10 (Prince Rd. Exit) near Tucson. This is an excellent nature site developed for viewing birds. Paths around the many ponds are well maintained and easy to walk on. At this time last year 47 species were seen including the Sora and Virginia Rail. Many rarities regularly show up at Sweetwater.

Difficulty: 1 Bring Lunch (Return about 2:00 p.m.)

Meet at Sun Bowl parking lot on 107th Ave. just south of Peoria Ave., Sun City to LEAVE at 6:30 a.m. or meet at the first rest stop on I-10, Sacaton at 7:30 a.m.

Saturday, November 22

Prescott Forest and Lakes

Leader: Jim Morgan 928-778-1041

kingbird@cableone.net

Explore Watson Woods Conservation Area and the lakes in Prescott's unique Granite Dells. Check the pine/juniper forest for Pygmy Nuthatch, Band-tailed pigeon and woodpeckers. Last fall a Common Goldeneye was seen along with many other wintering waterfowl at a wastewater treatment center.

Meet at Denny's Restaurant at the corner of Gail Gardner Road and Iron Springs Road, Prescott at 8:00 AM

Difficulty: 1 Morning only, but plan to enjoy lunch at one of Prescott's local restaurants.

Call leader to register.

Saturday, December 6

Thunderbird Park, Glendale

Leader: Carolyn Modeen 623 972-6273

ctmodeen@juno.com

Thunderbird Park has a formal bird blind adjacent to a pond where Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser and Ruddy Ducks congregate in large numbers in winter. Black-crowned Night Herons are residents. There is also desert environment to explore for gnatcatchers and thrashers.

Difficulty: 1 Morning only. Contact leader for meeting time and place

Agua Fria Monument

By Dwayne Fink

Shortly after Sonoran Audubon Society organized in 2000, a group of conservation-minded members started looking about for community projects to utilize their collective expertise and interests. The Chapter has completed two conservation projects, and is in the final stages of a third. The first was construction of a Butterfly/Pollinator Garden at the Desert Center at Lake Pleasant. The second project was creation of a Bird Check List for Arcosanti near Cordes Junction.

The third, and most ambitious of the projects has been a two year, four season survey of the birds of the Agua Fria National Monument. The two objectives of this effort are a Bird checklist and designation of the monument as an Important Bird Area. This short note will dwell on this project.

The Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM) is located at Sonoran Audubon Society's northern border. It extends along the east edge of I-17 north from Black Canyon City to Cordes Junction. It encompasses 72,500 acres, 1,400 of which are private land (mostly ranch headquarters). Elevation ranges from 2,150 feet on the south to 4,600 feet on the north. The monument contains three large mesas: Perry, Black and Sycamore Mesas.

The perennial water along with the associated lush riparian vegetation, the grassland mesas, the rugged cliffs and the change in elevation, all contribute to a wide range of wildlife habitat. It is a Mecca for birds and other animals. Most of us have driven past this gem for years, hoping to spot an occasional antelope - not expecting anything more. We are only beginning to know what we missed.

However, the Agua Fria National Monument was not so designated by President Clinton in January 2000 because of its diverse lush habitat and rich wildlife. What drove the decision was its archaeology. The monument contains one of the most significant systems of late prehistoric sites in the American Southwest. There are at least 450 prehistoric sites, and the number keeps increasing as exploration continues. Four of these sites were major settlements with one hundred rooms or more. Most of us birders have not taken time to explore the ruins. We have been too busy counting birds.

There have been a number of pluses for this project. The counter-list has expanded to more than 50, and includes members of Maricopa and Prescott Audubon Societies, and "outsiders". We have ID'ed more than 170 birds, and are dreaming of 200. The ranchers have been most cooperative, and we have found that BLM who administer the monument are supportive in every way.

We almost don't want to see the project end. But we have even more ambitious things in mind. We don't want to lose 50 good workers for lack of anything exciting to do.

We'll keep everyone posted on future projects that we are planning.

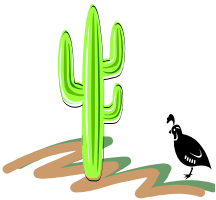
Calendar of Monthly Meetings...

**Location: Auditorium, Glendale Public Library, 5959 West Brown Street
(one block south of Peoria Ave. & 59th Ave. intersection) Time: 6:30 p.m.**

October 8, 2003	Jennifer & Dave MacKay of Solipaso Tours, "Birds and Natural History of Northwestern Mexico"
November 12, 2003	Cindy Fernandez, "What To Look At When You're Not Looking Up"
December 10, 2003	Bruce Taubert, Arizona Game & Fish, "Birding in Africa"
January 14, 2004	Alice Brawley - Chesworth, "Future Plans for Tres Rios"
February 11, 2004	Tom Jones, Grand Canyon University, "Mired in the Mud: A Look at Neotropical Rainforest Amphibians and Reptiles".
March 10, 2004	Bill Branan, Audubon Ranch, "Your Audubon Ranch - Grassland Research."
April 14, 2004	Clait Braun, "Discovery and Description of a New Species of Sage-grouse: Gunnison Sage-grouse."
May 12, 2004	Brian Wakeling, Arizona Game and Fish: "Turkey Research and Management in Arizona"

Other Dates of Interest:

October 1, 6:45 p.m. Board Meeting at Glendale Library in the small meeting room. All SAS members welcome.



Sonoran Audubon Society

P.O. Box 8068

Glendale, AZ 85312-8068